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ABSTRACT

With increased cooperation and coordination, it now is appropriate to review major changes that have led to an unprecedented level of interdependency among institutions. The current growth rate of interinstitutional cooperation is approximately 12 percent per year. This is inseparably linked in many respects to increased levels of statutory coordination and regulation by state agencies and boards and "1202" commissions. Examples of institutions and states leading the way in cooperative planning is the New Hampshire College and University Council, the Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine, the states of Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Changes are also occurring in types of institutions participating. Five years ago over 75 percent of the members came from private institutions, while less than 4 percent came from junior colleges. Today more than 40 percent came from public institutions and 13 percent from junior colleges, as the membership of private institutions still increases. The cooperative movement is also becoming increasingly international and new emphasis is being developed in the areas of continuing education, military programs, and colleges of art. Title III has made a positive contribution to consortia, but it does not encourage continuing voluntary cooperative relationships. Despite this fact and the little research done on consortia, the growth of voluntary cooperation has been phenomenal. (Author/KE)

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Research Currents

EVOLVING PATTERNS OF COOPERATION
by Lewis D. Patterson

Five years ago when the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education requested that a monograph be prepared on *Consortia in American Higher Education* (L. Patterson, 1970a), the author considered it important to define basic terms and concepts and to outline a historical perspective of the cooperative movement because of a general unfamiliarity of many educators with consortial developments. In today's revolutionary world of postsecondary education, where both cooperation and coordination—along with a number of other new conditions—have become rather commonplace, it now is more appropriate to review major changes that have led to an unprecedented level of interdependency among institutions.

QUANTITATIVE GROWTH

One measure of the growing interrelationship of institutions is revealed in the number of consortial arrangements. A national survey in 1965-66 (Moore 1967), based on incomplete data, identified 1,296 "existing" or "planned" consortia. Though there has not been a comparable inventory at the national level since then, more complete and more recent data on cooperative/coordinative institutional arrangements in several states allow us, by extrapolation, to project conservatively that there are more than 10,000 formal linkage systems of all types among the nation's 2,700-plus colleges and universities (Conners, 1974). The vast majority of these, however, are "paper consortia" limited to very specific purposes and activities.

At the other extreme of the more developed general purpose consortia, the listing in the *Consortium Directory* (L. Patterson, 1975b) provides a periodic measure of growth. It includes those organizations that were voluntarily formed, have a full-time professional director, have three or more member institutions, have multi-programs, and report tangible member support for the central organization. The first listing of 31 groups in 1968 included 300 members, while in 1975 the number increased to 106 and included 1,100 members. The current growth rate is approximately 12 per year.

RELATING COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The trend toward increased levels of statutory coordination and regulation by state agencies and boards and "1202" commissions, particularly in the public sector, is well documented (Berdahl, 1971; Chambers, 1974; Halstead, 1975; Perkins, 1972) and does not need elaboration here; but the cooperative and coordinative developments of the last five years are inseparably linked in many respects and should be acknowledged. In fact, in several instances the potential threat of external coordination, sometimes real and sometimes imagined, has been known to be the primary motivating factor for groups to cooperate.

The dichotomy of voluntary cooperation and statutory coordination is helpful in classifying the innumerable multi-institutional organizations that have been created over the years. Other reasons have also been set forth for distinguishing between these two types of organizations, such as symbolizing decentralized decision making as opposed to centralized decision making. However, this kind of oversimplification of basic issues is anachronistic when the primary need is to take action to improve the effectiveness of postsecondary education in a given region. In many cases the question is no longer "either-or." Both systems are needed, are here to stay, and should be further developed to complement and cooperate, not to conflict and compete. Leading the way in complementarity is the New Hampshire College and University Council that, with the aid of a major grant from the Kellogg Foundation, is working with the State Postsecondary Education Commission on the matter of statewide planning. If volunteerism can be sustained within coordination, there is promise of preserving pluralism not only at the institutional level but at the systems' level as well.

During the last three years a rash of new, complex, multi-institutional organizations were created that defy the traditional voluntary-statutory distinction. A case in point is the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. The consortium, founded in 1974 by three universities and seven hospitals, was not mandated by the Ohio General Assembly but receives funding specifically appropriated for the consortium. In Virginia the legislature has divided the state into six regions for continuing education purposes and six consortia have been established, but they are managed and funded by the member institutions. With the emergence of regionalization in a number of other states, notably New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois (Grupe, 1974), the line of demarcation is

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further blurred and will become more so in the coming years. The challenge of the future will be not only to interrelate institutions through voluntary and statutory systems but to interrelate the systems with each other at the state, national, and international levels. Richard M. Millard, Director of Higher Education Services, Education Commission of the States, and a liaison person for the State Higher Education Officers, has pledged his support with that of the author to help bridge the two organizational types whenever possible.

ILLINOIS MODEL

Modest support has been provided to encourage consortial and regional groupings in several states including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas, but, characteristically, the funds are earmarked for a very specific purpose or are limited to a particular sector or are not appropriated on a continuing basis. Illinois, with its Higher Education Cooperative Act (HECA) of 1972 (*Progress Through Cooperation*, 1974), is the only exception and offers a prototype model for the rest of the nation to consider. Public and/or private institutions, in any combination, including groups with some out-of-state members, may voluntarily submit proposals to the Board of Higher Education to be competitively considered for state support.

The major criticism of the program is that the funding—$350,000 annually, which represents less than one tenth of one percent of the state's budget for higher education—is a token investment. Nevertheless, Illinois has a better track record than any other state and its model is achieving impact. It allows maximum diversity in regional groupings and leaves the choice of participation and program proposal to local initiative. It is interesting that Illinois has institutions in 22 of the 106 consortia listed in the *1975 Consortium Director*, which is far more than any other state. It would be misleading to attribute the formation of even a majority of these to HECA because the consortium movement had strong roots in Illinois prior to 1972, but the state support has been instrumental in forming several new groups and in helping some others that needed a hand.

The Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center in Illinois and Iowa deserves special mention because of the cost avoidance it has achieved for thousands of graduate students and its 10 public and private member institutions. It now receives public monies from Iowa and Illinois to help underwrite operational costs. Another group in Illinois that has demonstrated cost effectiveness is the Graduate Studies Center at Millikin University, which involves Millikin and four public universities in the region.

SHIFTING CENTERS OF GRAVITY

Quantitative measures are not necessarily the most accurate method of assessing the gains being made in building substantive cooperative relationships. Another way is to analyze where the growth is taking place and what changes are occurring. One dramatic illustration has to do with the types of participating institutions. Five years ago, in a study population of 51 consortia (L. Patterson, 1971c), over 75 percent of the members came from the private sector, and less than 4 percent were junior-community colleges. Today, more than 40 percent of the participants are public institutions and 13 percent of the participants are junior-community colleges. This does not suggest that the liberal arts colleges, which led the way in the development of consortia in the decade of the sixties, are taking a back seat. They, too, are continuing to increase their participation in consortia, and perhaps will have more at stake than any other type of institution in their eventual demise or success. Also taking a more active role in consortia are continuing education schools, the military services, seminaries, art departments, health agencies, community agencies, and others. The fact that the full range of postsecondary interests are becoming more equitably represented in voluntary arrangements is a healthy change that will allow for greater cooperative program diversity.

Additional measures of substantive growth are found in the caliber of personnel being attracted to consortial positions; the monetary commitments of member institutions to the central organizations; new clientele being served; and the increased attention being given to consortium programs by accrediting bodies, governmental agencies, and national educational associations. In spite of widespread austerity in higher education—and no doubt because of it in some cases—the cooperative movement continues to gain overall strength and acceptance.

The movement of institutions to new levels of interdependency has not been limited to the United States and there are signs that the phenomenon will become increasingly international. With mass media, transportation, and other technology impacting on education, it is reasonable to expect that cooperative developments will transcend national political boundaries the same as they have our state boundaries.

SPECIAL AREA EMPHASIS

Continuing education is one of several specialized areas where interinstitutional cooperation has gained a good foothold in the past two years. The parent organization, the National University Extension Association (NUEA) in Washington, D.C., established an ad hoc committee on cooperation in 1973. The recommendation of the committee that NUEA establish a permanent Division on Consortia and Interinstitutional Cooperation was approved by the association's board of directors in the fall of 1974. The new majority of part-time students in postsecondary education and the outreach of institutions with nontraditional programs, coupled with the economic crunch and need to avoid duplicative efforts, are factors that collectively will forge new consortial arrangements for some time in the continuing education field.

Virginia more than any other state has taken a lead position in requiring regional planning of continuing education programs. Legislation enacted in 1973 authorized the State Council of Higher Education to divide the state into six regions and to establish within each region a consortium for continuing education. Private as well as public institutions are expected to cooperate in planning new programs and in providing maximum transferability of credits.

Thirty-four of the 106 consortia listed in the most recent *Consortium Directory* report they have some involvement in continuing education. One nationally known group is the Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center at Rock Island, Illinois, which enrolls primarily part-time graduate education students. With more than 4,400 registrations, the Center "functionally is larger than half of the graduate schools in the United States." Another group, the University Consortium Center at Grand Rapids, Michigan, was founded in late 1973 by merging the extension divisions of three universities and

later was joined by a fourth institution.

Military Programs: There are several relatively new cooperative programs directly related to the military. One is Eagle University at Fort Campbell, a consortium of 11 institutions situated in Tennessee and Kentucky. It was chartered in 1972 to provide on-post educational opportunities for personnel attached or related to the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division. The formal agreement that established Eagle University provided for standardized tuition, consolidated registration, establishment of a credit bank, standardized admission policies, single transcript of credit, elimination of residency requirements and unprejudiced acceptance of credit earned through the consortium.

Another far-reaching program that is not a consortium but involves extensive cooperation is the Servicemen's Opportunity College (SOC). Initiated in 1972 and jointly sponsored by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, SOC is a growing network of 139 two-year and 141 four-year institutions across the country and abroad, providing adult, continuing education for Armed Forces personnel. SOC is supported by a contract with the Department of Defense and by the Carnegie Corporation. A recent tabulation shows the nearly 300 participating institutions are providing programs for 250,000 service people.

Also established in 1972 at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas was the Community College of the Air Force. CCAF is a unit in the Air Training Command and permits Air Force and related personnel to integrate military instruction and voluntary education into documented, unified programs that will facilitate personal, career, and professional growth. The institution utilizes an "expanded campus" career education concept that provides structured programs for individual development, while allowing considerable latitude in the means of satisfying program requirements. Accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1973 eases the transfer of credits to other institutions.

In 1974 the Army announced Project AHEAD (Army Help for Education and Development), which involves the cooperation of participating colleges and universities. A high school graduate while in the Army enrolls at a home institution that serves as the academic depository for credits earned during enlistment. The Army pays up to 75 percent of the tuition. Upon completion of active duty, the student/soldier can use the GI Bill to complete degree requirements at the home college.

A different kind of military organization, whose activities are relatively new but which potentially may have significant implications for many schools and colleges, is the Aerospace Education Foundation, an affiliate of the Air Force Association. The mission of the nonprofit, unendowed foundation is to adapt and make available military vocational-technical instructional systems for civilian use.

OTHER ARENAS OF ACTIVITY

Due to space limitations, areas of new activity can be mentioned only briefly. The American Association of Theological Schools is another organization that has established a new program on cooperation and several of the clusters of theological seminaries are developing unprecedented joint relationships and programs.

The University of Mid-America, just founded in 1974 by five midwestern public universities, proposes to develop instructional delivery systems using the airwaves and other means to reach potential learners who find it inconvenient to go to a campus. Ambitious plans are underway requiring substantial long-range investments.

The assessment of joint programs is another area beginning to receive major attention. In April 1975, the Central Pennsylvania Consortium was visited for a week by a team assembled by the Middle States Association to provide an objective evaluation of joint programs. The Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities has received correspondence status from North Central Association for its University-Without-Walls programs at both the graduate and undergraduate level. And, pressures are mounting for consortia to demonstrate cost effectiveness. In working toward more sound fiscal policies, the member institutions of the Union of Independent Colleges of Art have found it useful to compare instructional costs.

The arts is another area where institutions will be pressed to relate to community agencies and state councils, such as in Illinois and Massachusetts. In Maine a national institute is being planned to interrelate cooperative education and interinstitutional cooperation. These are only a few of the many new arenas for cooperative activity.

TITLE III PROGRAMS

A review of consortium development would be incomplete without mention of Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965: "Strengthening Developing Institutions." The purpose of the act as set forth in law is

> to assist in raising the academic quality of colleges which have the desire and potential to make a substantial contribution to the higher education resources of the Nation but which for financial and other reasons are struggling for survival and are isolated from the main currents of academic life . . . to encourage and assist in the establishment of cooperative arrangements . . . (Howard, 1967).

The FY 1975 appropriation was $52 million for basic grants (bilateral and consortial arrangements) and $58 million for advanced grants (individual institutional grants). The FY 1976 budget proposes holding this program at the same level.

In a recent study of Title III called *How Much Change for a Dollar?* (1974), Harold Hodgkinson wrote:

> The authorizing legislation for the program is extremely vague, although this vagueness has turned out to be a virtue in terms of program effectiveness in that the administrators of Title III at USOE have had a fairly free hand about how to spend their money. They have done their work well, maintained a fairly low profile, and have spent a remarkably high percentage of their funds on programs, with a minimum on administration and monitoring (Preface).

There is no question that Title III has made very positive contributions to American higher education and has been extremely helpful to many consortia. Title III, however, does not meet the need to stimulate and encourage continuing voluntary cooperative relationships throughout postsecondary education.

RESEARCH

At least 26 dissertations have been written on consortia in the past 10 years and two-thirds of these have been done in the last five years. For each one completed, at least two others were started but not finished. The usual problem is

that the topic is more complex than anticipated and becomes unmanageable.

Interinstitutional cooperation has not been subjected to rigorous, systematic research as a field of study. The dissertations generally are exploratory, descriptive, and speculative or are the case-study type. There simply are not many good current resource documents available. Franklin Patterson's book, *Colleges in Consort* (1975), is the best source for a critical analysis of the current state of cooperation. Hodgkinson's Title III study is well done and provides some new insights but it deals with only one sector of the cooperative movement. Fritz Grupe, executive director of the Associated Colleges of the St. Lawrence Valley, has made some of the more solid contributions to the literature beginning with his dissertation in 1969 ("The Establishment of Collegiate Cooperative Centers"). Three of his more recent writings are: *Interinstitutional Cooperation at the Departmental Level* (1972), *Survey of Statewide Agency/Consortia Relationships* (1974), and *Undergraduate Cross Registration* (1974).

To meet some of the immediate needs in this area, Franklin Patterson recommended in *Colleges in Consort* "... the establishment of a five-year grant to a center for research and development in higher education to undertake applied research in interinstitutional cooperation and to disseminate its findings in lay language to trustees, presidents, faculties, foundations and the public" (pp. 127-28).

THE FUTURE

The success of voluntary cooperation in American higher education has been phenomenal when you consider: the support from foundations has been lean; the skeptics have out-numbered the believers ten-fold; the Carnegie Commission and other major national reports on higher education have virtually ignored cooperation as a serious endeavor; the states, with few exceptions, have invested little more than rhetoric in volunteerism; and no national organization has championed the cause. The movement is lively and continues to evolve new patterns of cooperation, to push off in new directions. If it continues to broaden and diversify, it will move closer to the ideal, which is to interrelate not just postsecondary education but entire communities and regions.

Learning to cooperate at the institutional level is a slow and painful process at best. To give impetus to the movement, there is need for stronger voices to speak out for the inclusion of voluntary cooperation as a part of the national strategy for improving the effectiveness of postsecondary education, and for the inclusion of voluntary cooperation for planning purposes at the state level. Issues have yet to be examined; there is unfinished business.

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